

**MANSFIELD DOWNTOWN PARTNERSHIP
BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING
Wednesday, January 2, 2008
Mansfield Downtown Partnership Office
1244 Storrs Road**

4:00 PM

Minutes

Present: Chair: Philip Lodewick, Steve Bacon, Tom Callahan, Matt Hart, Janet Jones, Frank McNabb, Betsy Paterson, Steve Rogers, Kristin Schwab, Phil Spak, Betsy Treiber

Staff: Cynthia van Zelm, Kathleen Paterson

1. Call to Order

Philip Lodewick called the meeting to order at 4:05 pm.

2. Opportunity for Public to Comment

There were no comments from the public.

3. Approval of Minutes

Mike Gergler made a motion to approve the minutes. Janet Jones seconded the motion. The minutes were approved unanimously.

4. Director's Report

Cynthia van Zelm said the monthly Open House is this Thursday at 5:30 pm. She noted that there have been four to five people attending.

She said the winter banners are now up along the pedestrian walkway. They are sponsored by the Partnership, Town of Mansfield, Community Center, University of Connecticut, and LeylandAlliance.

5. Update on Storrs Center Project and Next Steps

Ms. van Zelm referred to a draft timeline of the key Storrs Center milestones through Phase One of the project. She said that Howard Kaufman and Macon Toledano from LeylandAlliance would be at the next meeting.

Ms. van Zelm pointed out the proposed sub-phases for Phase One on a new phasing map. She reminded the Board that the old Phase 4 (residential in the back) was now proposed to happen earlier in Phase 3.

Ms. van Zelm said she was working with Leyland on two signs that would indicate that the Dog Lane-1 (DL-1) building is coming soon, in response to a prior suggestion from Board members. One sign would be placed adjacent to the DL-1 site and one would go near the kiosk on Storrs Road. Ms. van Zelm spoke with Rudy Favretti who suggested a couple of historic names for the buildings. As Steve Bacon had suggested, she has looked into following the Town sign regulations (even though sign would be on University land), and has received approval from the Town.

Tom Callahan said it would be important to determine if work could start sooner rather than later on Storrs Road as all the funding is in place (pending State Traffic Commission approval). Ms. van Zelm said the study of a possible roundabout at the intersection of Route 275 and Storrs Road is being studied by a consultant to the Town. If the roundabout has support it could be part of the State Traffic Commission submittal. There will need to be some time allocated to local review. Steve Bacon asked if the cost of the roundabout would be covered by the Storrs Road funds. Ms. van Zelm said the initial review indicates that a roundabout would actual decrease the Storrs Road costs. Janet Jones asked who decides on whether the roundabout is part of the application. Ms. van Zelm said that there must be Town staff review as well as sign-off by the Planning and Zoning Commission (as a referral). The final official determination is the State Traffic Commission.

Frank McNabb asked if it has been determined which businesses will be moving into DL-1. Ms. van Zelm said there was a general idea but no commitments will be made until the rents are fairly closely determined.

Ms. van Zelm noted that work on the phases is not wholly sequential, i.e., Phase One does not need to be completed before Phase Two starts.

Kristin Schwab asked if the entire Village Street would be completed at once, and, if so, what phase would that be? Ms. van Zelm suggested that this be a question for Mr. Toledano at the next meeting. She indicated that the road will serve as a construction road and a secondary access road to Phase One (per the Planning and Zoning Commission) initially.

Mr. McNabb asked why a site plan for the entire project is not submitted at once. Ms. van Zelm said the phases allow for adjustments as the market changes. She noted that the Planning and Zoning Commission did approve zoning for the entire site. Mr. Callahan added that he expected that LeylandAlliance will not build faster than the market can absorb. Mr.

Lodewick said the project is unique in its scope and goals and so the timeline and phases may shift depending on demand. Ms. van Zelm reiterated the strong interest in housing – over 300 people have approached her about potentially renting or owning in Storrs Center. Mr. Lodewick noted the national trend to move to college communities for the arts and other amenities.

Mr. McNabb asked about whether there was a strong interest in the retail piece. Ms. van Zelm said that approximately 200 inquiries have come in about commercial space. That is without any marketing or outreach efforts to businesses. She continued to acknowledge that some of these inquiries will be more legitimate inquiries than others.

6. Report from Committees

Finance and Administration

Mr. Callahan reiterated that the Finance and Administration Committee was working on proposed changes to the development agreement between the Partnership and LeylandAlliance. Much of what was included in the development agreement as far as next steps has been completed so it is now important to see what should be covered regarding expectations. What are the duties and responsibilities of Leyland, the Town, the University and the Partnership to move the project toward construction? He said that he, Town Manager Matt Hart, and Ms. van Zelm are working through a detailed outline of goals. The goal is to meet with Leyland at the end of the month.

Mr. Callahan said the Finance and Administration had reviewed a draft of the Partnership 2008/2009 budget. It will come back to Finance and then to the Board in February.

Mr. Callahan said the Partnership's lease is up February 29. The goal is to look at moving into DL-1 but it would not be ready so interim space was discussed. It was determined that it may be too disruptive to move twice and that the Partnership should seek a one year lease with the Partnership's landlord Taylor Management.

Mr. McNabb asked about UConn's budget for the Storrs Center project. Mr. Callahan said that UConn has split the costs of the operations of the Partnership with the Town (with membership dues as a smaller piece of the income). The University is also providing the land (to be sold) and access to utilities. Purchase and sale agreements are in place with Leyland. There are agreements regarding the use of UConn water and sewer, and two environmental agreements regarding any remediation that may be necessary.

7. Grants

Courtney Hendricson from the CT Main Street program introduced herself. She considers the Storrs Center project one of the state's success stories and can be used as an example of the comprehensive planning that has gone into the project.

Ms. van Zelm said that she and Ms. Kathleen Paterson had met with Ms. Hendricson and her colleague and CT Main Street Assoc. Director Kim Parsons-Whitaker about more opportunities to work together. There is a CT Main Street award program where the Partnership may be eligible for some of the awards.

Ms. Paterson also noted that the CT Commission on Culture & Tourism has a few more grant opportunities than in the past. She will be looking into applying for more grants with a focus on the arts. *(note that the Commission funded the Storrs Center DVD, and the Jorgensen 50th Anniversary weekend package brochure).*

Ms. Paterson said she would also be looking at grants for the Festival.

Ms. van Zelm will be pursuing another STEAP (Small Town Economic Assistance Program) grant for Storrs Center infrastructure needs.

8. Communications

There was some discussion of continuing to reach out to the Chronicle.

9. Adjourn

Betsy Treiber made a motion to adjourn. Tom Callahan seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 5:00 pm.

Meeting notes taken by Cynthia van Zelm.